



Criteria and Instructions to Applicants

2007 Western Wildland Urban Interface Grant Program

Congress has provided increased funding assistance to states through the USDA Forest Service State and Private Forestry programs since 2001. The focus of much of this additional funding was mitigating risk in Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) areas. This portion of the National Fire Plan was developed to assist interface communities manage the unique hazards they find around them. Long-term solutions to interface challenges require informing and educating people who live in these areas about what they and their local organizations can do to mitigate these hazards.

The 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy focuses on assisting people and communities in the WUI to moderate the threat of catastrophic fire through the four broad goals of improving prevention and suppression, reducing hazardous fuels, restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, and promoting community assistance.

Grant Considerations:

- Meets the grant criteria.
- Meets the 50/50 match requirement.
- Each grant request will be limited to a maximum of \$300,000.
- At least 25% of all available grant funds must be awarded to new projects.

Applications will be screened for eligibility based on:

1) Meeting the Hazard Mitigation Criteria in one or more of the following project category areas:

a) **Fuels:** Recipients may facilitate and implement mitigating fuel treatments in or adjacent to identified fire prone communities to reduce the threat of wildfire to communities. This can be conducted across jurisdictional boundaries, on adjoining private lands, or within respective communities, including all components necessary to plan and implement the project.

b) **Education:** Recipients can provide leadership to coordinate, develop, and distribute wildland urban interface education programs in association with insurance companies, communities, local government agencies, and other partners. Informational and educational programs must target prevention and mitigation of loss. Programs should lead to the use or establishment of one or more fire program elements such as fire safety codes, implementation of Firewise safety practices, fuels treatments within fire prone communities, or community planning to define fire safe actions suited to the local ecosystem.

c) **Planning:** Priority will be given to those activities that tie back to an established community fire plan. Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP's) are created by local communities and may address issues such as wildfire response, hazard mitigation, community preparedness, structure protection, or a combination of the above. The process of developing these plans can help a community clarify and refine its priorities for the protection of life, property, and critical infrastructure in the wildland-urban interface. The Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) minimum requirements for a CWPP are: 1) Collaboration (must be developed by local and state government representatives in collaboration with federal agencies and other interested parties, 2) Prioritized Fuel Reduction (plan must identify and prioritize areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommend the types and methods of treatment), and 3) Treatment of Structural Ignitability (must recommend measures that homeowners and communities can

take to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed in the plan). A copy of the CWPP handbook can be found at <http://www.safnet.org/policyandpress/cwpphandbook.pdf>

Examples of Projects that DO NOT Qualify (not all inclusive):

- Preparedness and suppression capacity building; an example such as, purchase of fire department equipment (try VFA, RFA, DHS and FEMA grant programs)
- Small business start-up funding
- Research and development projects (try Economic Action Program)
- Website, GIS, Database
- Infrastructure (building remodel, bridges, road maintenance/road infrastructure, water development)

2) A 50/50 match. This means that the allocated grant amount must be matched in full by the recipient using a **non-federal source**. Title III funds under the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000, PL 106-393 are not considered federal dollars and may be used as match. The matching share can be soft match (which includes training hours valued at an accepted rate, donated labor/equipment, etc) and/or hard match (which is actual dollars spent other than federal grant funds within the specified scope of work.)

Eligible applications will be scored based upon:

- 1) Is this project achievable? (time, goals, budget, etc.)
- 2) Is this project measurable? (# of acres treated, # of education/outreach programs, etc.)
- 3) Is the applicant clearly showing collaborative elements and partners? (confidence level)
- 4) Is this project implemented from an existing community plan or is the request to develop the plan?
(Note: preference will be given to those projects that are incorporated in a completed plan)
- 5) Is the applicant clearly showing future maintenance for this project?
(Note: preference will be given to those projects clearly showing a maintenance schedule)

The Western States Wildland Urban Interface Grant may be used to apply for financial assistance towards hazardous fuels and educational projects within the following four goals.

Goal #1 – Improve Prevention in the Interface:

Expand outreach and education about wildfire prevention in the interface through the use of programs such as Firewise in order to reduce the risks to homes and private property. Homeowners and local governments bear much of the responsibility for improving the defensibility of homes in the interface but may lack the knowledge and information regarding what needs to be done and how to accomplish it. Additionally, they may lack the experience and expertise to deliver educational outreach programs to individuals and communities. States can provide the leadership needed to coordinate, develop and distribute educational materials and the partnering between homeowners, communities, insurance companies and government agencies.

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):

- Firewise or similar programs
- Living with Fire newspaper inserts
- Fire education components to Project Learning Tree
- Pamphlets, brochures, handouts

Goal #2 – Reduce Hazardous Fuels:

Fuel reduction projects and vegetation treatments have been identified as a means of mitigating wildfire hazards. These are projects that remove or modify fuels in and/or adjacent to WUI development. Effective fuels mitigation treatments can be implemented across jurisdictional boundaries, on adjoining

private lands, or within the respective communities. The states can facilitate the required coordination, collaboration, and partnering of these projects. Projects of this type include fuel breaks, thinning, pruning, landscape modifications, etc. The overall purpose is to modify or break up the fuels in such a way as to lessen catastrophic fire and its threat to public and firefighter safety and damage to property. Project proposals should consider all elements required to implement treatments on the ground, which includes acquiring the necessary permits and consultations needed to complete plans and assessments.

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):

- Defensible space around homes and structures
- Shaded fuel breaks
- Fuels reduction beyond defensible space
- Removal of slash including piling and burning; mulching; grinding; etc.
- Prescribed fire

Goal #3 – Restore Fire-adapted Ecosystems:

Millions of acres of forest and rangeland face high risks of catastrophic fire due to deteriorating ecosystems health and drought. One way to prevent future large, catastrophic wildfires from threatening communities is by carrying out appropriate treatments (such as prescribed burning or thinning) to restore and rehabilitate forest and grassland health in and adjacent to the WUI. Such treatments have reduced the severity of wildfires, and may have additional desirable outcomes, such as providing sustainable environmental, social and economic benefits. Projects require planning, consultation, design, and sometimes contracting, and may take several years to implement completely. Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of treatments is usually necessary.

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):

- Fuels reduction beyond defensible space
- Removal of slash including piling and burning; mulching; grinding; etc.
- Prescribed fire
- Thinning
- Promoting the establishment of native plants

Goal #4 – Promote Community Assistance:

Creating conditions in and around individual structures that will limit the transmission of fire from wildland to structures is basic to reducing the fire hazard in the Interface. This is a responsibility of homeowners and communities. The states can facilitate these actions through safety inspections; demonstration projects; training and education of homeowners, officials and service personnel; fostering fires safe groups; and coordination of projects, services, and supplies.

Examples of projects that qualify (not all inclusive):

- Homeowner-association sponsored fuels reduction projects
- Municipal, fire district, county coordination of slash disposal
- Multi-jurisdictional hazard reduction projects

These project categories may be complementary to one another. Please note that these goals are not listed in priority order, and all are equally valued. States are encouraged to identify local needs and submit proposals using one or a combination of these grant focus elements. Needs in any community depend on local fuels, topography, organization, public knowledge of the issues, and the will to address those issues.

Application Instructions:

1) All blocks are fill-in enabled and character locked. Applicants must fit all information into the allotted space. The application should be no longer than 4 pages. **Applications that have been modified to go beyond 4 pages and any attachments will not be considered by the review committee.**

2) Application guidelines by box number:

- **Box 1 & 2-** Basic applicant and community at risk information.
- **Box 3-** The project area description should give a **brief** overview the project to point out the hazards and clearly show the need for work in this area. If applying for a fuels reduction project some examples of vegetation types are forest, rangeland, woodlands, etc.
- **Box 4-** The scope of work should explain exactly how the grant dollars will be spent on this project. Unlike the overview, this will provide the specific details of the project. Please remember to be concise. Say exactly what will be done with grant funds not what you expect the reviewer wants to hear.
 - *An example of a scope of work is:* A 300 foot wide fuel break 20 miles long will be created around the perimeter of Firesafe Village. A brush masticator will be used where possible and hand crews from the Firesafe Contracting service will complete the work in other areas. Approximately 125 individual lots will be hand treated, creating adequate defensible space around the homes. Grant funds will be used to create and distribute firesafe brochures in this and surrounding subdivisions....
 - *Some examples of planned maintenance would be* –delegating a portion of homeowners’ dues to maintain fuel breaks on an annual basis – updating and reprioritizing community wildfire plans as goals are accomplished and work is completed, xx years...
 - The project timeline should include such things as: begin/end dates, milestones, quarterly accomplishments, etc.
- **Box 5-** See above description of CWPP’s meeting minimum HFRA requirements.
- **Box 6-** Check as many boxes as apply to the project. Please answer the specific questions under the three Project Category fields only if they are checked and apply to your project. If, for example, Planning is not a part of your project either leave the question below it blank or fill in N/A.
- **Box 7 & 8-** The totals in these boxes add automatically when all data is entered into the fields. You must press enter or tab to the next box before it will automatically add. Please do not enter numbers into contributors’ space. If the contributors name contains a number please spell out that number so that it will not add into the total column. Check that all numbers add up correctly and have transferred correctly to the Official Use only box on page 1. Do not put the grant amount requested into box 7 as that will make box 7 and 8’s match totals different and points will be deducted for these boxes not matching. See page 3 of this document for description of hard vs. soft match.

Application Due Dates:

The standard application form for 2007 must be used. Application deadline is Monday, September 18, 2006. All applications must be submitted electronically by close of business to the following email address:

nfpgrants@mt.gov

Applications not submitted electronically (i.e. paper applications sent in by mail) will not be accepted. For additional information, contact Paula Rosenthal, National Fire Plan Program Manager at the Montana DNRC, (406) 542-4235.